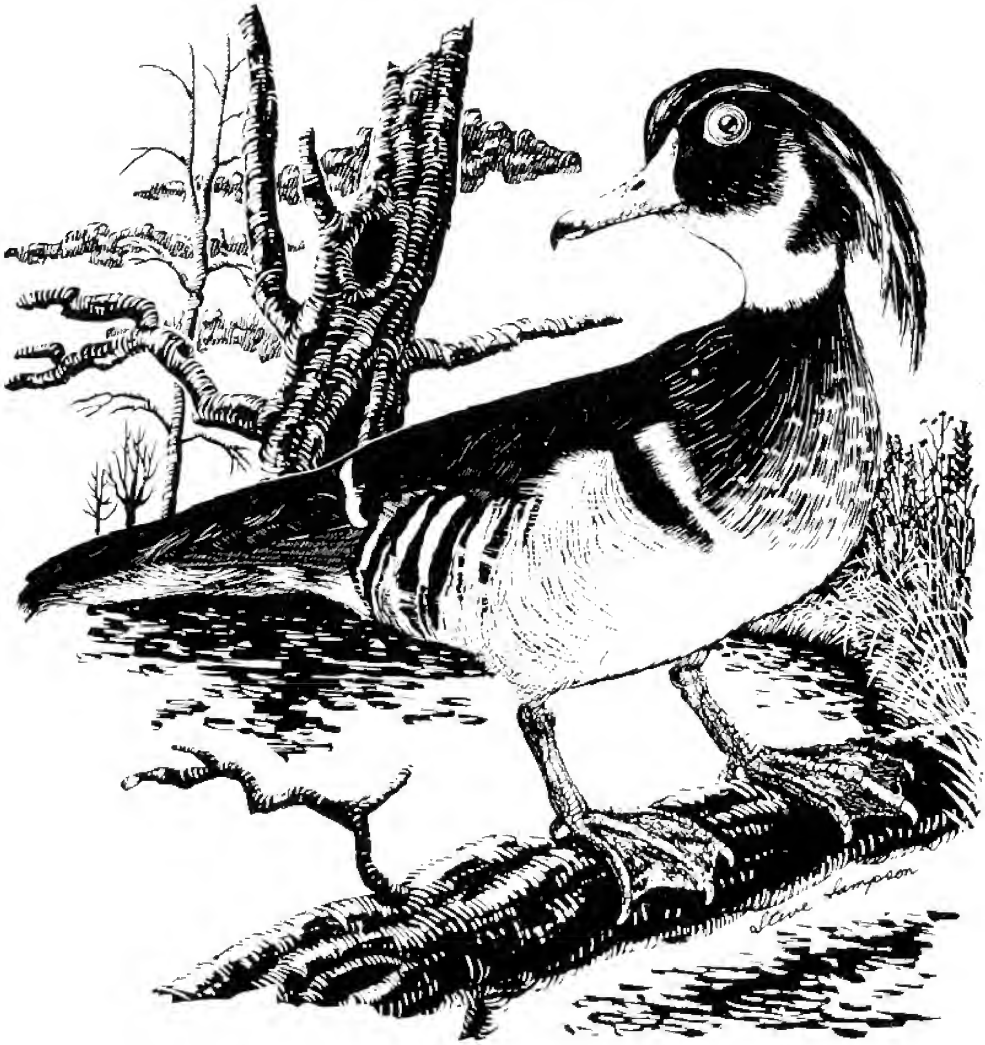
IOWA BIRD LIFE



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Notes Of Birds In The Davenport Area

THOMAS J. MORRISSEY
DAVENPORT
LINE DRAWINGS BY E.W. STEFFENS
CEDAR RAPIDS

PART 1 WATERFOWL

THE MIGRATION OF DUCKS AND GEESE--

Ducks and geese tavelled over two main paths in their migrations through this area. One path lay in a general north-south direction and extended over the east west width of the area.* Migration along this route took place at altitudes of 1000 to 3000 feet. It was the chief route of geese of all species. It was used in both spring and fall by large numbers of Mallards and smaller numbers of other pond ducks. During severe November storms it was travelled by large flocks of Lesser Scaups. The second route followed the course of the Mississippi River and secondary routes followed its tributaries--the Wapsipinicon and Rock Rivers. Ducks migrating along these paths flew at heights from near the surface of the river to 1500 feet. Generally flights were within a few hundred feet of the water. This was the route used by almost all diving ducks and many pond ducks under normal weather conditions. Where the Mississippi River flowed east and west it was often possible to see duck flying east and west and at low altitude along one route while at higher altitude flocks of the same species crossed their paths at right angles on the other route.

Migration of diving ducks apparently took place during the daylight hours and migratory flights of these species where frequently observed. In fall, flights of these ducks were most often seen from dawn to 10:00 AM. There was a noticeable decrease in the number of flocks observed after 9:00 A.M. In spring, migratory flights of diving ducks were observed during all the daylight hours. Migrants in obviously tired condition were often observed joining flocks on the water in late afternoon suggesting that they had been flying during the greater part of the day.

* It is questionable whether this was actually a "path" or whether it merely represented the north-south trend of migration.

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These notes were written in 1950 51 based on observations covering the period 1938-1950 and were given to the editor at the time of the author's death in 1962. The information still applies basically to the current situation here at Davenport. Some editorial comments have been added in parenthesis. The notes appear as close as possible to their original form and are printed with the view that they contain much new material for Iowa bird watchers. Notations on abundance follow Trautman 1940. The notes have been divided into four parts and will appear in four issues of IOWA BIRD LIFE. Literature cited will be at the end of the last installment. Newer members who did not know Tom Morrissey will find his obituary in the December, 1962, issue of IOWA BIRD LIFE. --ed.

Many migratory flights of Mallards and a few migrating Pintails were observed. These flights occured at all hours of the day both spring and fall. Teal, Mallards, and Pintails were occasionally heard at night and since so few obviously migratory flocks of pond ducks other than Mallards were observed it seems likely that these species migrated at night.

Geese, also, migrated chiefly at night. On clear nights few geese were heard but on nights with low overcast or fog they were often heard from early evening until early morning. With few exceptions the migrating geese seen in the daytime followed a north-south route with no reference to the Mississippi River.

Variations in the size of the continental waterfowl population seemed to have little effect on the numbers of ducks seen locally. The most important local factor determining abundance was heavy precipitation in March, April, September and October. Permanent ponds were rare and the rivers offered almost nothing in the way of vegetable food. In dry years, therefor, few ducks stopped long in the area. In wet years floods created many large temporary ponds and marshes with an abundant food supply of smartweed, waste corn, etc. In wet years ducks seemed very numerous. Thus during the wet spring of 1950, so many ducks were present in the area as to give the impression that waterfowl had increased considerably over the dry years (locally) of 1948 and 1949. Actually, during 1948 to 1950 continental population had decreased steadily. I have discussed causes of local waterfowl fluctuations in more detail elsewhere (Morrissey, 1947).

DUCK AND GEESE HUNTING--

Duck hunting was a popular sport during the course of this study and was sufficiently intensive to modify the local warerfowl picture considerably. In 1947, 1664 migratory bird hunting stamps were sold in Scott County, Iowa and 1606 in Rock Island County, Illinois. A few of these sales represent purchases by philatelists, dove hunters, and others who did not hunt ducks in this area. It is safe to assume, however, that between 2500 and 3000 persons hunt ducks here each year. The number of ducks killed each year, however, was almost impossible to determine because of the widely varying methods used by hunters and the great variance in the amount of time spent hunting.

Hunters fell into two groups, the point shooters (who usually shot only on weekend) and the scull boat hunters. The former were by far the more numerous. They constituted about two thirds of all duck hunters. Usually they shot over small pot holes or larger ponds along the rivers or from points on islands in the rivers. The length of the hunting season varied from 30 to 65 days during 1938-1950 and consequently the number of days the "week enders" hunted ranged between 10 and 20. These hunters were so widely scattered and the success of their efforts varied so greatly that it was impossible even to estimate the number of ducks they killed each year. Their method of operation was simple. They constructed a more-or-less adequate blind on a likely looking point and placed one or two dozen decoys within shotgun range. If the blind was located in a choice district limit bags were sometimes secured. Mallards were killed most frequently. Other pond ducks made up perhaps 15 percent of the total killed by these point gunners and on very large ponds Lesser Scaups were killed in numbers equal to those of Mallards. The chief disadvantages of point shooting were two: attractive ponds and marshes were few and this type of hunting was so easy that the better sloughs and river areas became overcrowded with hunters.

Scull boat hunting was a more effective way of taking ducks although it involved considerable effort and expense. Scull boat hunters operated from the shore or islands of the Mississippi. A runway was constructed to hide the boat and hunters and 50 to 200 decoys were set out in the channel some distance from the blind. After a flock had alighted among the decoys the boat, a flat, pumpkin-seed shaped craft, was sculled toward them by a single oar protuding through a transome in the stern of the boat. The boat was drab in color, sometimes decked with grass and one or two hunters could like flat or crouch completely concealed in it. Unless the ducks had had recent experience with such a boat they allowed close approach, swimming slowly ahead of it but turning their heads to look at its approach as much in curiosity as fear. There were about 25 of these scull boats operating each year from the mouth of Rock River to the mouth of the Wapsipinicon. Hunters at the head of the guide wall at Lock 14 killed 95 ducks in the first 2 weeks of the 1949 season from one boat. Another group at Credit Island killed 65 in the same period. Most scull-boat hunters told me they expected to kill from 150 to 250 ducks each season. A surprisingly large number of these hunters hunted every day. They killed mostly Lesser Scaup and other diving species although a number of Mallards were taken in this manner also.

Any attempt to determine the number of ducks killed here yearly represent nothing but guess work. Scull boat hunters must have killed between 3000 and 4000 ducks and point hunters probably killed an equal number. The relative importance of different species as game birds as based on examination of bags was as follows:

1. Mallard*
2. Lesser Scaup*
3. Ring-necked Duck#
4. Blue winged Teal#
5. Pintail#
6. American Goldeneye
7. Wood Duck
8. Green-winged Teal

It was possible to get a much clearer idea of the number of geese killed. Whenever a hunter was fortunate enough to kill a goose the event was usually announced in the local newspapers. From such sources I estimated that in one year 15 Canada Geese and an equal number of Blue or Snow Geese were killed although, in the average year, only half that number were taken. Less than half were killed by scull boat hunters.

* These 2 species were of about equal rank and together constituted about 75 percent of all ducks killed.

\# These 3 species constituted about 15 percent of all ducks killed.

CANADA GOOSE

An uncommon spring migrant and a fairly uncommon fall migrant is the Canada Goose.

Canada Geese were first recorded between February 25 and March 12 each spring. Flocks of 25 to 50 were noted about once a week thereafter until the third week of April. Almost none of the spring migrants stopped in this area although small groups sometimes rested on the Princeton Marsh for a few days. From April 12 to April 25, 1949 about 450 rested on the marsh and on adjoining Grant's and Steamboat Slough and fed in the new oat fields on the river terrace north of Princeton each evening. These feeding flights occured between 5:00 and 6:00 P.M. and the geese stayed in the fields only about one-half hour. Fifty were present in the same area in the second week of April, 1950.

CANADA GOOSE

The first fall migrants were heard in the first week of October. Apparently this species migrated chiefly at night during the fall season as very few flocks were seen and these usually in the late afternoon and early evening. Through the month of October Canada Geese were heard on two or three nights each week. Often their cries were heard all night at intervals of fifteen minutes to several

hours and it was apparent that on such nights many flocks were passing over. Geese (of all species) were heard most frequently and most clearly on overcast night and on nights when there was much fog. It was obvious that the birds flew much lower under such circumstances. The few flocks seen in October contained from 35 to 100 individuals. No Canada Geese were heard after the first week of November although single individuals and very small flocks or family groups were observed irregularly until the third week of that month.

Aside from the Canadas observed on the Princeton Marsh the greatest number were observed in flight. Their direction in flight was from northwest to northeast in spring and southeast to soutwest in fall. Unlike many waterfowl they did not follow the course of the Mississippi where it swings west for 20 miles near Davenport.

Hutchins's Goose, a subspecies of the Canada Goose, was very rare spring migrant and a very rare fall migrant. My only records of this subspecies were based on a photograph appearing in the Davenport Democrat, October 27, 1939, showing a single bird killed on a marshy pond north of Princeton. It had been in the company of a small flock of Snow Geese. On March 26, 1950, Decker Lardner and I found 8 of these little geese on the channel of the Mississippi immediately above Lock 14. They were resting at the far edge of a flock of Canvasback and Lesser Scaup so that an effective comparison of their sizes could be made. Except for the fact that they sat much higher in the water they seemed little larger than the Canvasbacks. (In recent years small flock have been seen in late April and early May-- ed.).

SNOW GOOSE

The Snow Goose is a rare spring migrant and an uncommon fall migrant.

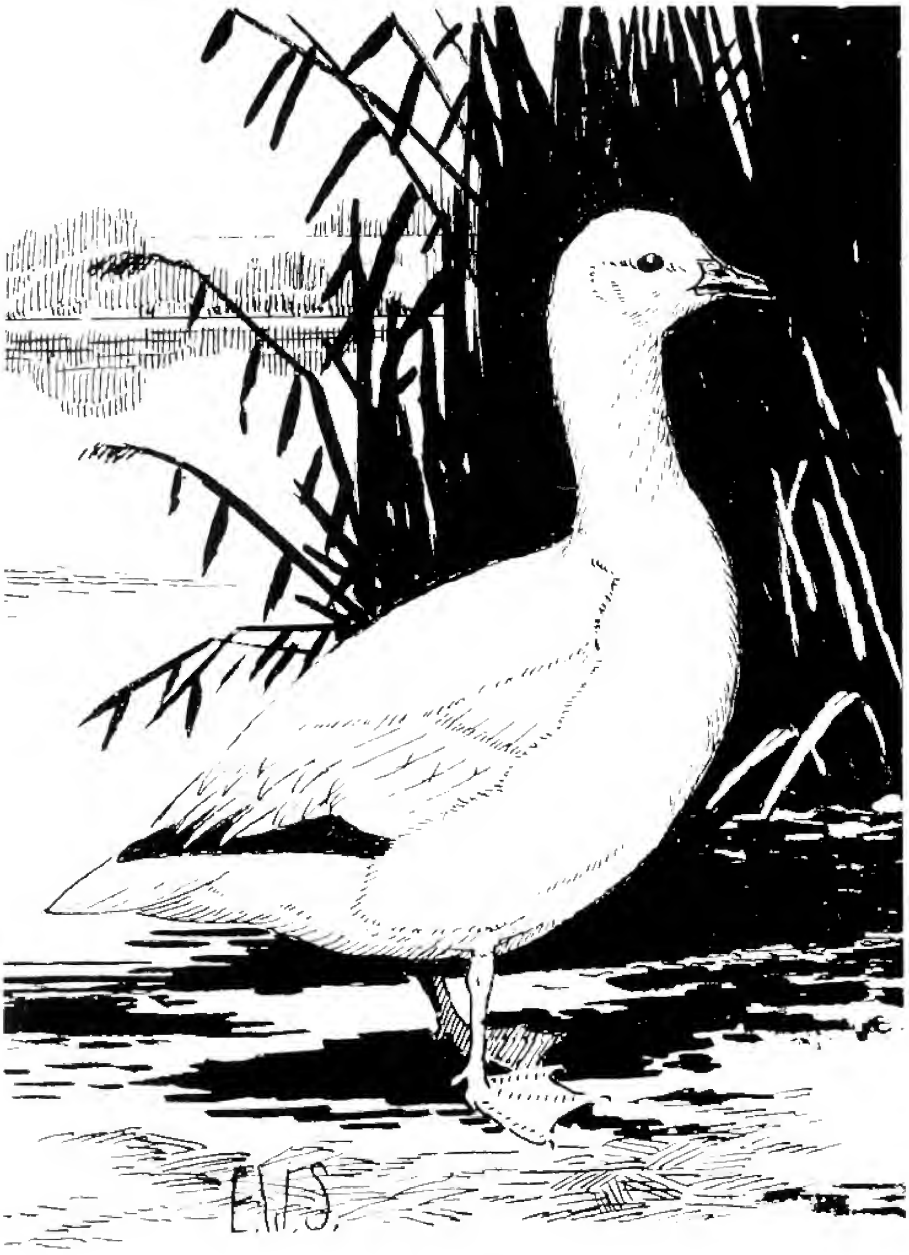
Mixed flocks of Snow Geese and Blue Geese were seen 1 to 4 times each spring. All spring flocks were seen between March 24 and April 7. These groups were usually made up of from 10 to 25 Snow Geese and twice as many Blue Geese. Fall migrants were first recorded between October 20 and October 29 and until the third week of November they were heard one to three times each week. Fall flocks were larger than spring flocks and groups of 125 to 300 individuals were not uncommon. A few of these large flocks consisted entirely of Snow Geese.

Most of the Snow Geese that I recorded were observed flying over this area. Occasionally they were observed flying up from corn-fields in the fall. Judging by newspaper reports from one to seven were killed in this area each year. Most of these were killed on large, open ponds bordering the Wapsipinicon and the Mississippi but a few were taken by scull-boats on the channel, particularly on foggy mornings when the geese allowed a close approach. About 1500 geese of this species spent the last week of march and the first three weeks of April near Thomsen, Illinois, 15 miles north of the edge of the Davenport area. Details are given elsewhere (Morrissey, 1951).

BLUE GOOSE

The Blue Goose is a rare spring migrant and an uncommon fall migrant.

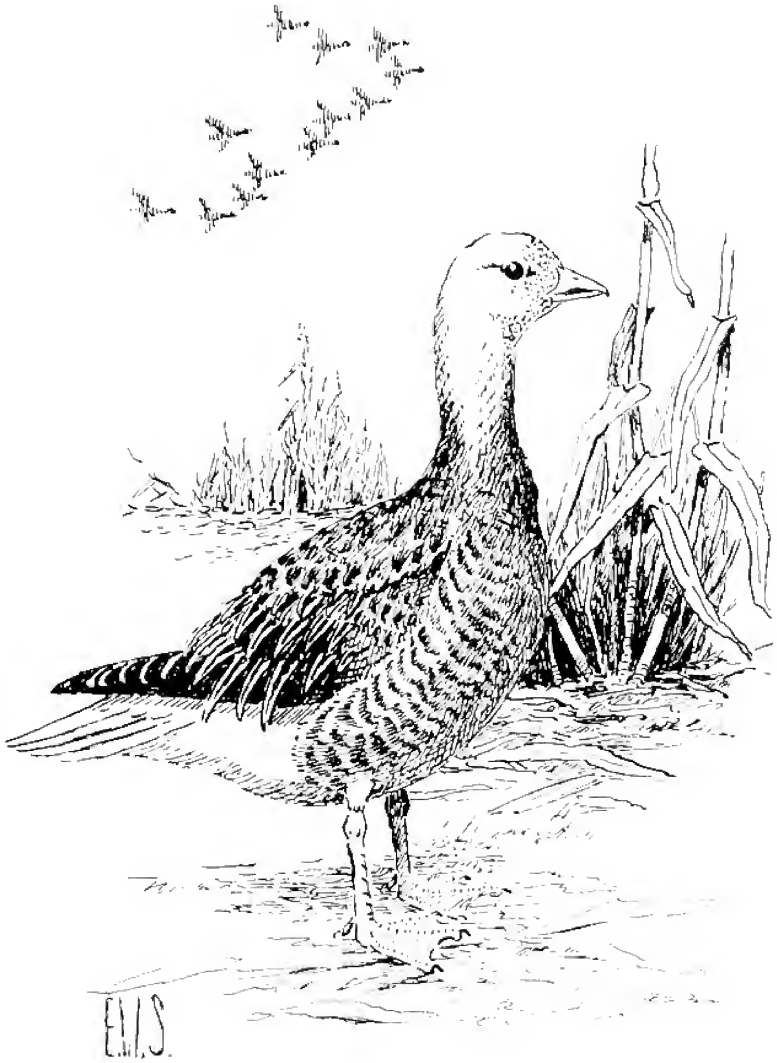
Blue Geese were observed with Snow Geese on one to four occasions each spring. Dates on which they were observed range from March 24 to April 7. Blue Geese usually outnumbered Snow Geese two or three to one in spring. Fall



SNOW GOOSE

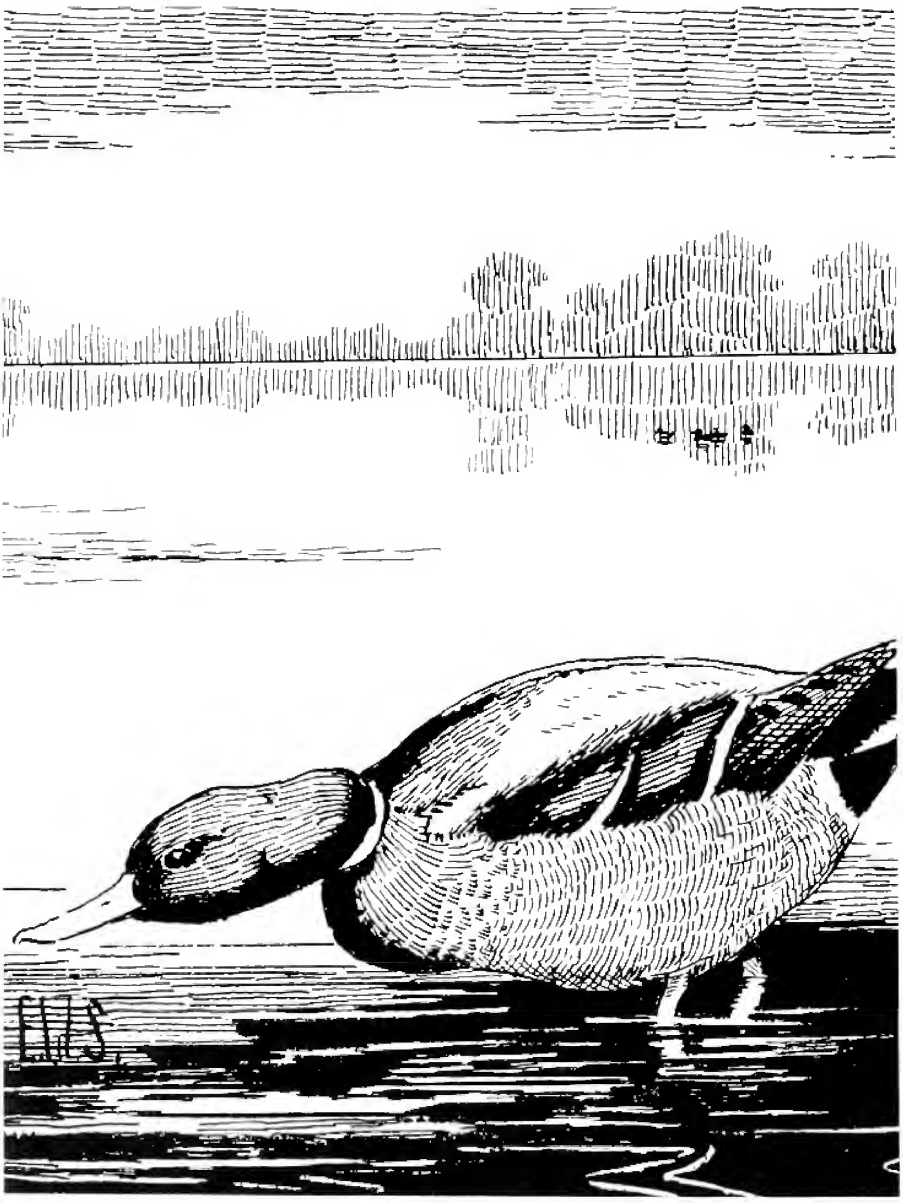
migrants were first observed from October 20 to October 29. They were seen or heard thereafter from one to three times each week until mid-November. In fall Blue Geese occurred in numbers equal to Snow Geese.

A few Blue Geese stopped briefly on the channel of the Mississippi but most of those recorded were seen or heard in flight. Fewer Blue Geese than Snow



BLUE GOOSE

Geese were killed each year although they appeared in the same numbers. Approximately 2000 Blue Geese spent the early spring above Lock 13 near Thomsen, just 15 miles outside the Davenport area. (The Thomsen area also attracts a few White-fronted Geese which usually escape observers in the immediate Davenport area. ed).



MALLARD

An abundant spring and fall migrant; a rare summer resident; an uncommon or rare winter resident.

A few Mallards were present every year during January and early February. The number present was determined by the amount of snow lying on corn fields and by the amount of ice covering the Mississippi. In "open" years with little

ice and snow, waste corn was easily available to the ducks and the open waters provided resting places. But even in the most severe winters small flocks of Mallards could be found above or below Lock 14, near the mouth of the Wapsipinicon, and near the mouth of Rock River. These groups varied from 25 to 300 birds.

A gradual build-up in the number of Mallards began about the middle of February. At this time scattered pairs of mated birds could be observed away from the wintering flocks, although it was not until the last week of February or the first week of March that larger flocks, obviously migrating, could be observed passing north. These flocks of migrants were usually rather small. Seldom did they contain more than 50 birds. As the ice began to lave sloughs of the Mississippi and its tributaries from the middle to the end of March, large numbers of ducks used these quiet back waters as rest areas. In the Steamboat Slough, Grant Slough area above Princeton, 3000 to 5000 Mallards could be found each day during the last weeks of March and early April. In the years 1941, 1945, 1947, and 1950 early spring rains were very heavy and in these years the rising Mississippi, Wapsipinicon, and Rock River inundated parts of their flood plains, especially north of Princeton and south of Moline. The flood waters covered the remains of the previous year's corn crops and converted beds of smart weed and other weeds into ideal feeding grounds. In these years all species of ducks were very abundant. On a motor boat trip on the Mississippi north of Princeton and on the Wapsipinicon from its mouth to the vicinity of McCausland in the second week of April, 1947, I estimated that more than 50,000 Mallards were present. In the low water years in which Mallards were confined chiefly to sloughs and occasional ponds in river terraces the migratory peak was reached earlier and a decline in the number of birds present in the area occurred sooner than in years when high water levels provided good feeding grounds. By the first week of May not more than 400-500 Mallards remained in the Davenport area, and by mid-May the species was very hard to find except in a few favored areas where it nested. As stated before, Mallard flocks in spring were small. Even when large groups of several thousand birds concentrated on favored feeding grounds the large groups invariably broke down into pairs of small bunches of a few dozen birds when the ducks were disturbed and forced into the air. Courtship was seldom observed among spring migrants or winter residents although practically all spring migrants were mated. A few unmated males could be found at all times in spring, particularly during late April and early May. On the courtship flights which were sometimes observed in April one or rarely two females ascended in broad spirals pursued by from two to eight males. I never observed any formalized courtship on the water although males sometimes were seen chasing females thru the water.

No Mallard nests were found but females with downy young were recorded: May 23, 1948, six young, Princeton; May 28, 1949, five young, Rock Island Arsenal, Sylvan Slough; June 21, 1947, young in first plumage, upper Meridosia Slough, Rock Island County. It seems probably that Mallards nested in very small numbers where ever permanent bodies of water, a suitable vegetational substratum (sedge meadows or cattail borders in the three instances cited above), and freedom from human interference made conditions favorable.

The first transient south bound Mallards entered the area about the first week in September and from that date until the second week of October 30 to 100 could be observed each day. These early migrants were found along the sloughs

of the Mississippi and along the borders of islands where beds of arrow head and smart weed provided food and cover. About mid-October the species began to increase in numbers as small flocks entered the area daily. Since this period coincided with the opening of the hunting season few of the new arrivals remained long in the area. A few gained a short period of rest by skulking in narrow sloughs along river banks, or frequenting isolated ponds but the many hunters and the heavy barge traffic on the channel, kept the birds moving. Few migrants remained long in the area during the hunting season except between weekends when hunting pressure slackened. With the end of the hunting season, usually about the first week of December, and the appearance of ice on the Mississippi large flocks began to form. Some of these groups of 200 to 750 birds could be found each day until the end of December above Lock 14 or above Princeton. In the early afternoon these ducks together with still larger flocks of several 1000's which apparently resided out of our area, would fly to the corn fields in the flood plain and terrace land of the Wapsipinicon below McCausland. Toward dusk these flocks returned to their resting areas, although on moon-lit nights they often flew out to the fields later in the afternoon and remained until after night fall. These flocks setting out for or returning from corn fields took the form of long lines in single file or very long, narrow V's. After mid-December the numbers of wintering birds decreased and by the end of that month only the individuals which made up the small winter flocks remained.

Mallards showed less disparity in sex ratio than any other duck. In spring there were about 45 females to 50 males although the fall flocks' ratio was about 30:50 and at least twice as many males as females were taken by hunters. About 40 percent of the ducks taken by hunters were Mallards and of these, two-thirds or more were taken by shooters from blinds on points, sloughs, and ponds. The remainder were taken in deep water sets by scull-boat hunters when heavy hunting pressure forced the ducks to seek rest on the channel. Birds in full winter plumage occurred as early as the third week of October but did not predominate until a month later. I examined the crop and gizzard contents of twelve Mallards taken in fall. All contained much corn and, in addition, two contained weed seeds (chiefly POLYGONUM) and earth worms. Mallards were relatively quiet although in areas with little visibility, like the flooded lowland forest they sometimes frequented in spring, the females were very noisy.

BLACK DUCK

An uncommon spring and fall migrant; a very rare winter resident.

The first migrating Black Ducks were observed each year during the second or third week of March. From the time of arrival until the third week of April from 5 to 25 could be recorded each day. There was no evidence of a migratory peak. I never found the species after the first week of May. Autumn migrants were present during the first week of September and increased gradually until mid-October when a maximum of 15 birds might be recorded. During the hunting season Black Ducks were very shy and few were seen. About the first week of December, or when shooting ended, Black Ducks began to increase in numbers and could always be found with flocks of Mallards in the open water above Lock 14. A partially submerged stump filled area of Smith's Island above Lock 14 seemed very attractive to Black Ducks and between 25 and 30 were found there thru most of December in 1947, 1948, and 1949. With the freezing of the open

patches of the Mississippi and the coming of snow, "black mallards" left the area. There are very few winter records: January 7-9, 1949, one pair near Credit Island; December 29, 1949, 20 at Smith's Island.

Black Ducks were invariably associated in singles, pairs or small flocks with Mallards and seemed to share the habitat preferences of that species. Besides the Smith's Island locality mentioned, the species was most numerous at Grant's Slough. They occurred regularly on all the wooded sloughs and back waters of the district but were less numerous in flooded sedge meadows, mud flats, and on river terrace ponds. They fed with Mallards in corn fields during the fall and were numerous in flooded corn fields in spring. Probably not more than a few dozen Black Ducks were killed in this area each year. They were extremely wary and shy when alone, less so when with Mallards, and since they frequented the broad bays of the channel when shooting was heavy, they were as often taken by scull boat hunters as by point gunners. I have examined 5 Black Ducks killed in October and November; all had brilliant, coral-red tarsi and toes.

GADWALL

An uncommon spring migrant; a very rare fall migrant.

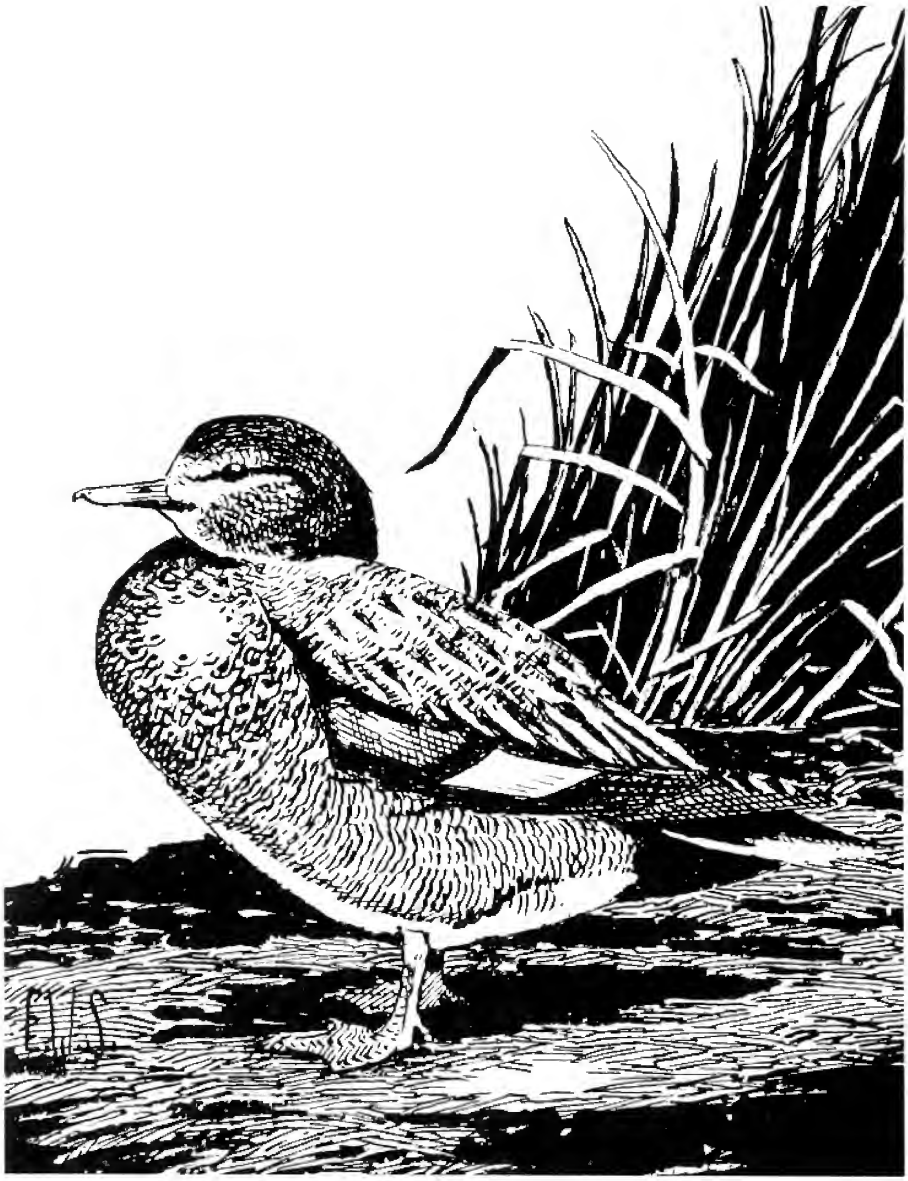
The first Gadwalls were recorded during the last week of March but it was not until the second week of April that the species was present in numbers. At the height of abundance 20 to 50 birds could be found daily. By the first week of May Gadwalls had left the area. Gadwalls were reported by hunters three times in fall from 1939-1950. These records were all in October but I was unable to obtain exact dates. Doubtless, many more Gadwalls were present than these records indicate but because of the absence of marshes or ponds in fall very few could be expected to remain in the region. Where extensive marshes occurred, as in the Savanna, Illinois, district to the north and along the Cedar River in Iowa, to the south, the species was more numerous in fall. Practically none of the duck hunters in the Davenport area recognized Gadwalls.

Gadwalls were most numerous in the temporary marshes formed by the overflow of the rivers into sedge meadows and fields of the flood plain. They were found more rarely on ponds of the river terraces. The princeton Marsh was especially attractive. An unusual habit of Gadwalls was their tendency to associate with flocks of diving ducks on the bays of the Mississippi above Lock 14, Lock 15, and at Credit Island harbor. They were the only shallow warer species which habitually did this. There was no evidence that they fed while in deep water nor did they acutally mix with the divers but remained on the outskirts of the flock courting, preening, and sleeping. Courtship occurred thru out the stay of the ducks but was very vigorous early in April. Males in small groups of three or four pursued single females thru the water and when the latter took flight the males followed at once and attempted to cross in front of the females with wings arched and white speculum conspicusouly displayed. These courthsips were short and covered but a few yards. During courtship both sexes uttered a soft, muffled quacking. At other times the females gave a loud quack which, to me, was indistinguishable from that of the female Mallard.

PINTAIL

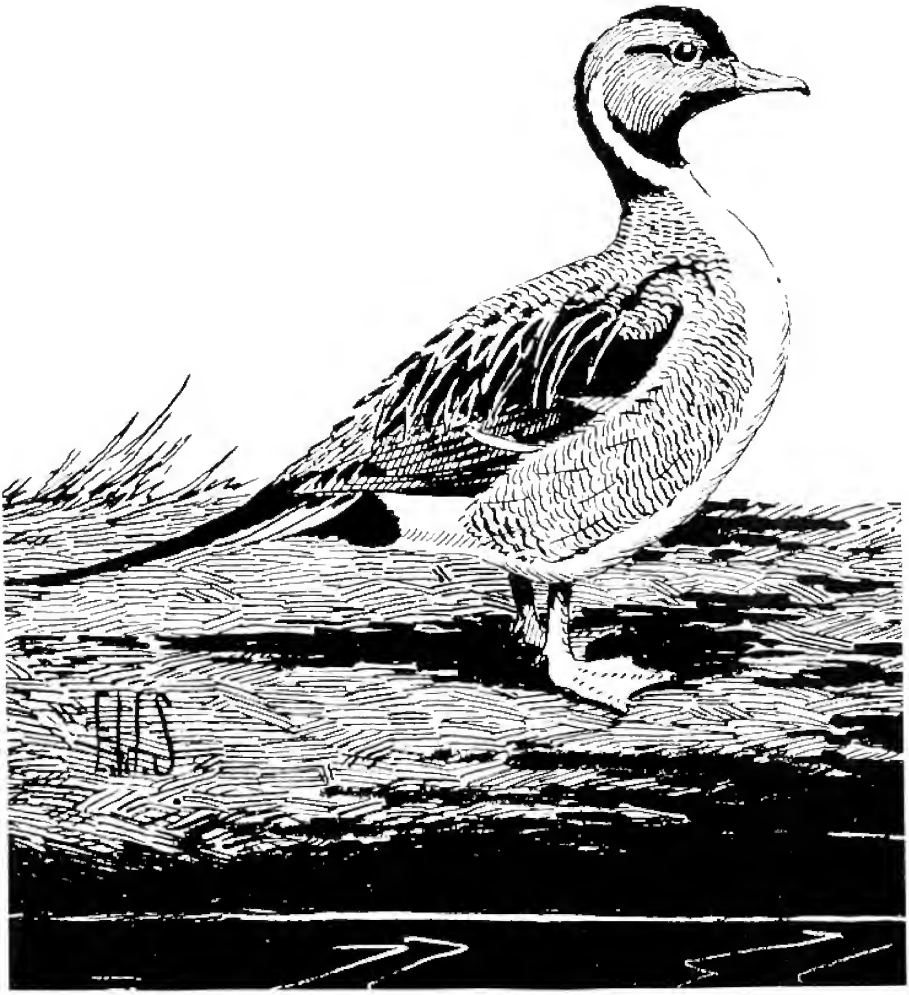
A common spring migrant; an uncommon fall migrant.

Pintails in flocks of 10 to 20 appeared during the last week of February.



GADWALL

usually as the ice began to break up on the Mississippi and the appearance of puddles from thawing in the corn fields along flood plains. Increase in numbers occurred slowly until the end of March when the species began to increase rapidly. Peak numbers were reached in the first week of April and no decline in numbers took place until the third week of that month. Thereafter Pintails



PINTAIL

decreased rapidly in number and in the third week of May the last transients of the species were recorded. Until the last week of March it was unusual to see more than 35 to 50 Pintails in one day; from the last week of March until the third week of April 500 to 2000 could be seen each day. Maximum numbers occurred when there were many flooded corn fields. Very few Pintails were

observed in fall. As with the American Widgeon and all other pond ducks (except Mallards, Black Ducks, Blue-winged Teal, and Wood Ducks) the decrease in fall numbers was probably attributable to absence of marshes and flooded fields in fall. Since there were few feeding grounds to induce the ducks to stay they either avoided this area or passed through without stopping. Small flocks have been found in the vincity of Grant's Slough, and about ponds on the Rock River and Wapsipinicon during the second week of September. Over 600 were observed each fall in the first week of October near Savanna, Illinois north of our region. I have never observed more than two groups in any one week from the first week of October to the third week of November although at least one group was found each week. These observations were too few to indicate any pattern of abundance. Except for one male found with Mallards and Black Ducks at Smith's Island, December 18, 1948 no Pintails were recorded after the last week of November. (Some have been seen in recent years on Christmas counts, ed.).

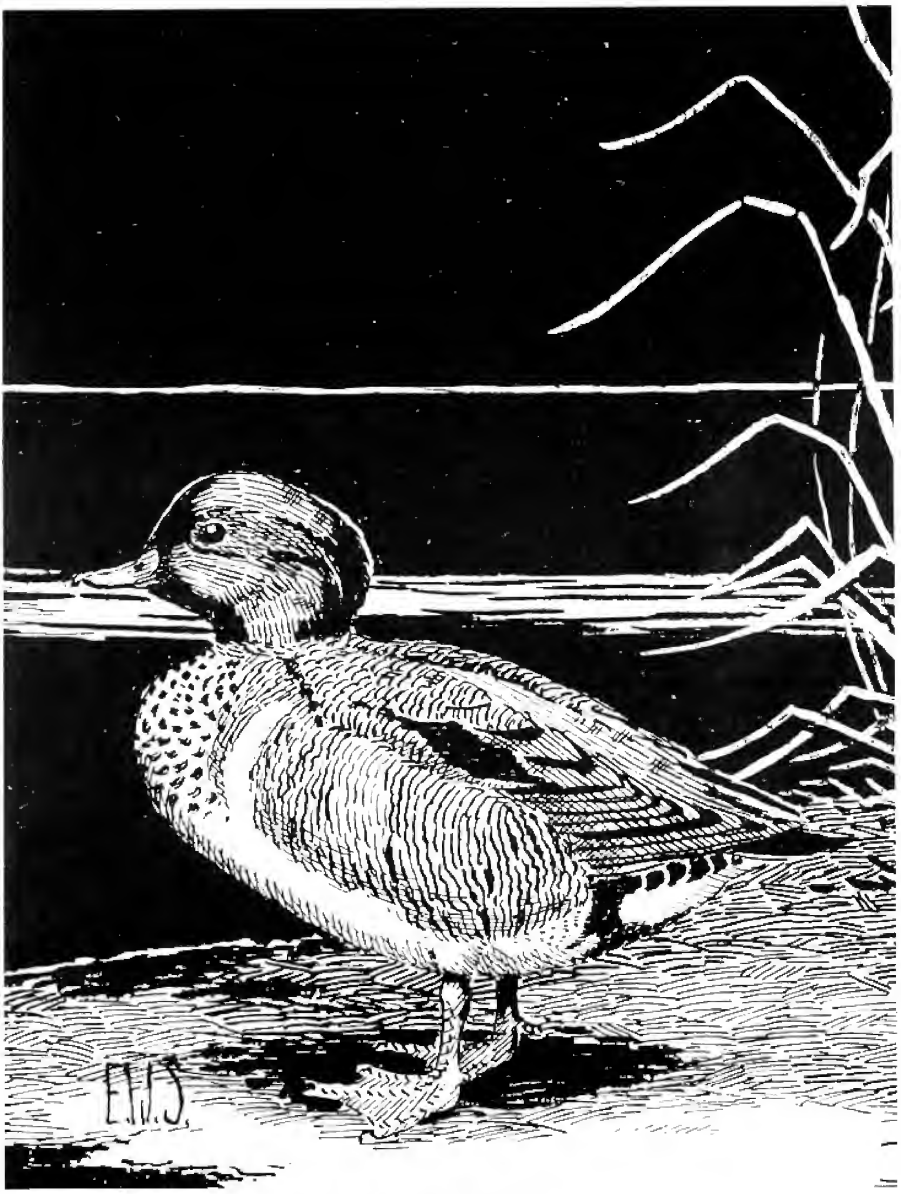
Flooded corn fields, particularly those of the Princeton Marsh and on Rock River south of Moline were favorite feeding grounds for Pintails. To a lesser extent they used ponds in sedge meadows and where sedge stubble was short they sometimes "grazed" after the manner of American Widgeon. Very early in spring, when there was little open water elsewhere, small parties of Pintails could be found in flooded bottom land forest along the Wapsipinicon north of Princeton. In late March and early April flocks of Pintails increased in size and groups of 150 to 175 birds were occasionally seen. Later in April there were few flocks but many paired birds. It was at this time also that courtship flights (similar to that of Mallards) were often observed. Male Pintails were very noisy in spring. Their notes at that time were a clear, mellow whistle sounding, to me, somewhat like the syllables "wheeoo, wheir" repeated at frequent intervals when the birds were in the air.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL

A fairly common spring migrant; an uncommon fall migrant.

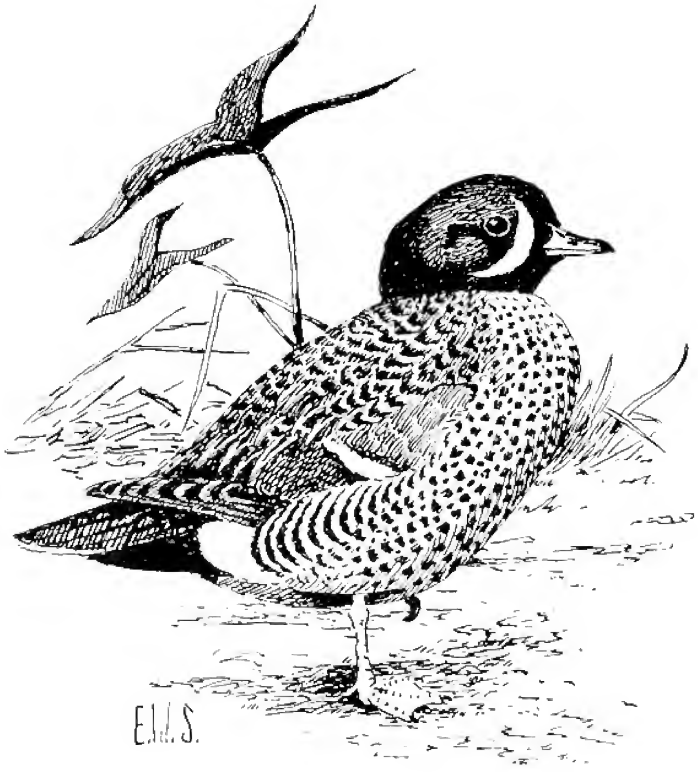
Flocks of 5 to 10 Green-winged Teal could be found in the Davenport area during the last week of March but it was not until the first week of April that the birds could be recorded regularly. Up to 200 could be found each day during the second week of April if sufficient intermittant marsh land was flooded. The numbers of this species began to fall off in the third week of April and although 25 to 50 could be found each day until the second week of May these birds occurred chiefly as pairs and were widely scattered. Fall migrants appeared as singles or small bunches, often with Blue-winged Teal, during the second week of September. From that date until the second week of November about one flock, usually four to seven birds, was seen each week. None were recorded after the third week of November. (Many records for late December have been made in recent years, ed.).

Green-winged Teal were less restricted in habitat than any other species of duck. I found them regularly at Nahant, Credit Island Harbor, the Channel of the Mississippi above the Rock Island Arsenal, and above Lock 14, at Smith's Island, and at all the ponds in the vicinity of McCausland. The greater numbers (350 on April 14, 1950, at Princeton) were always found in flooded fields and meadows near Princeton and south of Moline. In fall these teal were most often found along the margins of heavily wooded sloughs like Grant's and Steamboat



GREEN WINGED TEAL

Sloughs and their tributaries. From March to mid April there was a preponderance of males: about five males to three females, but thereafter the teal were usually found in pairs. In spring, the males while on the water gave a peculiar piping call note "phreep, phreep, phreep" each syllable repeated monotonously at three second intervals. The gizzard of one male killed in November contained seeds of POLYGONUM and remains of some small crustaceans.



BLUE-WINGED TEAL

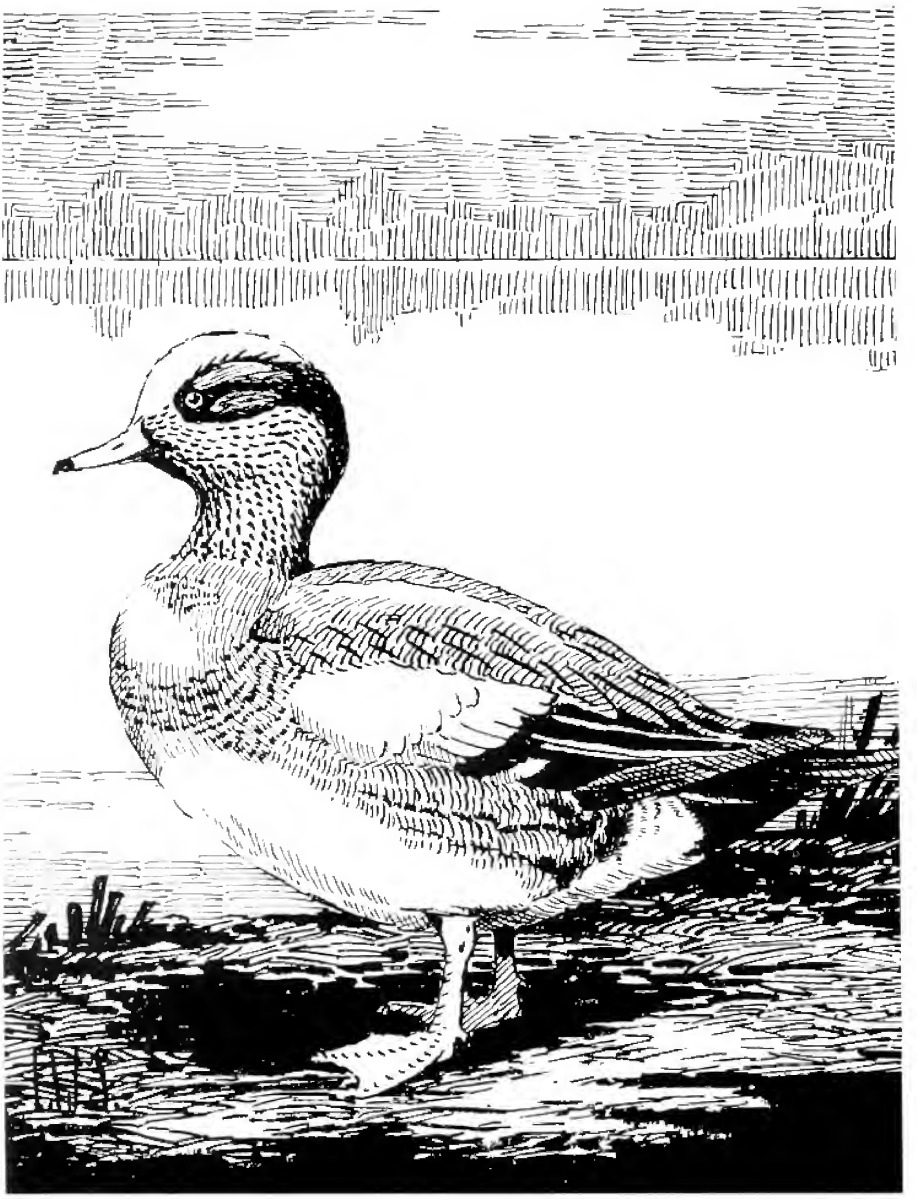
A common spring migrant; a fairly common fall migrant.

Single drake Blue-winged Teal were observed as early as the third week of March in 1941 and 1945 but it was not until the last week of March that migrants of this species were recorded regularly. A gradual increase in numbers took

place up to the third week of April after which numbers remained stationary until the first week of May. A steady decline occurred through the month of May and by the first week of June not more than 15 or 20 pairs remained in the area. It is quite probable that some of these last pairs nested in the area as I saw occasional adults through the summer months but I never found nests or young. In March 50 to 60 Blue-winged Teal could be recorded each day; in April up to 1100: and in May from 30 to 700. Fall migrants appeared during the third week of August. From the third week of August to the second week of September a very gradual increase was noted until by the beginning of the third week of September 75 to 150 teal could be found each day. These numbers were maintained until the second week of October after which the species declined rapidly in numbers. Except for a female killed November 10, 1947 no Blue-winged Teal were observed after the last week of October. (One has been seen on a recent Christmas count, perhaps slightly injured. ed.).

Spring Blue-winged Teal were found in a variety of habitats. They reached their greatest abundance in flooded corn fields and meadows and on inundated mud flats. Like Shovelers they were more often found on ponds of the river terrace. At the height of abundance small groups of this species were found everywhere. For example from April 23 to April 27, 1950 I found Blue-winged Teal on the channel of the Mississippi above Lock 15 (10), Lock 14 (2), above LeClaire (5), on Grant's Slough (30), Princeton Marsh (more than 250), ditch along Highway 84 above Cordova (30), Spencer Creek, a small rocky creek with steep limestone walls (9), 5 scattered "sky ponds" in Scott County (2, 5, 7, 7, 9), Nahant, marshes a cattail marsh (50), and Credit Island harbor (13). These localities represented every possible aquatic habitat in the Davenport area except wooded sloughs and the borders of river islands. In fall, when more desirable haunts had dried up and disappeared Blue-winged Teal were frequently found with Wood Ducks in the quiet back waters of the rivers--even those quite heavily wooded--where they apparently fed on duck week (Lemma) and insect larvae. Blue-winged Teal never formed large flocks. One group of 53 was the largest which I observed and most flocks contained from 5 to 12 birds. Teal observed in May were almost always mated; those observed earlier in the season had about three males to two females and I was unable to determine what proportion of the birds in these flocks were mated. Courtship "head bobbing" by males was noted continually in flocks and even by males of pairs which were obviously mated. On two occasions I saw males on land spring into the air and strike each other raking blows with their feet and upon alighting continue their battle for a few seconds with thrusts of their bills. The object of these brief but intense battles was apparently a female which the drakes had been attending. But in both instances the drakes left the hen after the encounter.

Three dead Blue-winged Teal were found in April 1950 along a fence bordering a pond near McCausland. Apparently the ducks had struck the fence or near by telephone wires in flight. One had a 1/2 inch rent in the skin of the neck. On those years in which the duck season opened in the first two weeks of October Blue-winged Teal made up 35 to 50 percent of the first week's bag. After the second week of October the species was of little importance. The crops and gizzards of two April and one November Blue-winged Teal contained seeds of POLYGONUM and CAREX, and remains of crustacea and insect larvae.



AMERICAN WIDGEON

Fairly common spring migrant: an uncommon fall migrant.

American Widgeon occurred first as scattered pairs during the last week of March with flocks of Mallards and Pintails in flooded areas or more rarely with flocks of diving ducks on the channel of the Mississippi. A rapid increase in numbers took place during the first and second week of April. At the height of

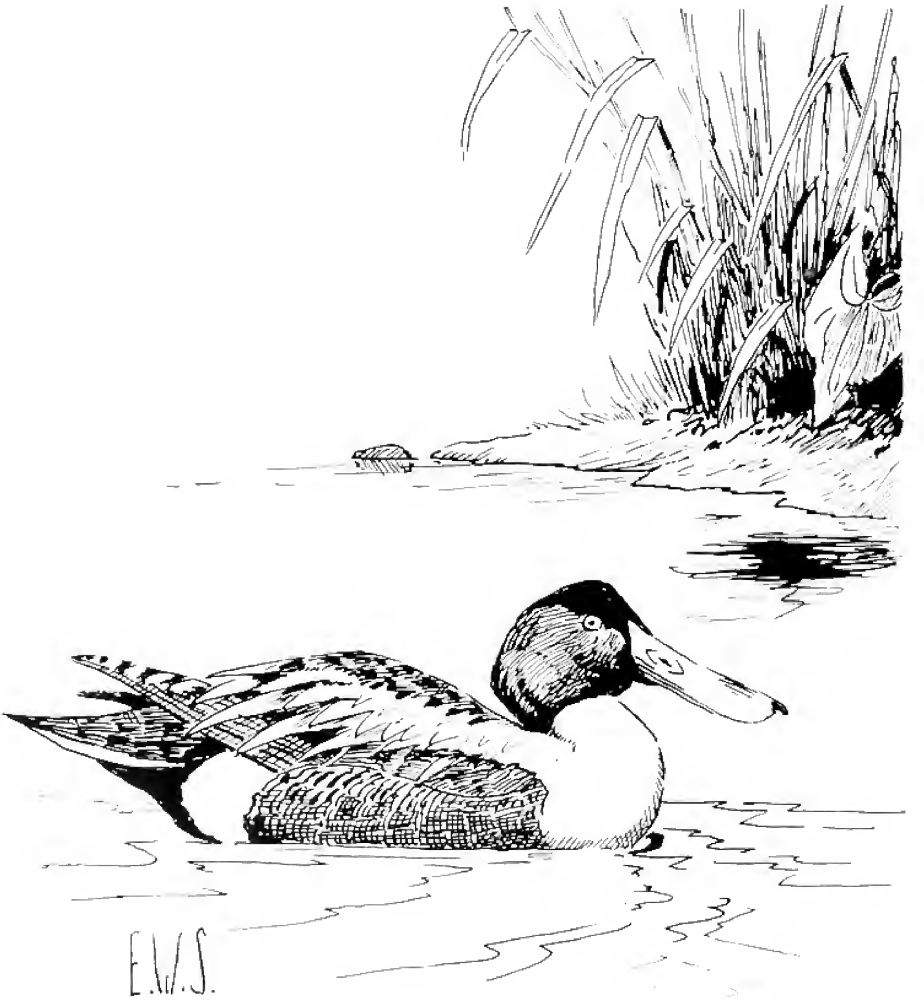
abundance in the second week of April 500 to 3000 could be found daily. The large variation in peak numbers was caused by presence or absence of suitable feeding areas. When flooding or heavy rain had made temporary marshes anywhere in the flood plain the American Widgeon were most abundant. Peak spring numbers were maintained thru April but by the first week of May a rapid decrease took place. By the third week of May only 10 to 15 could be found and these were usually single females or males in poor plumage. It was during the third week of May, also, that the last "baldplates" were recorded. The rarity of this species in fall could be attributed to the absence of feeding areas. The extensive temporary marshes of spring disappeared by July and there was seldom enough rainfall to refill them. I found 350 American Widgeons in the first week of October in 1949 at Savanna, Illinois, 60 miles north of this area, where there are many permanent marshes and shallow, grass-bordered sloughs. But in this area I never saw more than one flock in any week in fall and in five of the years of this study it was not recorded in fall. None were recorded after the last week of October.

Widgeons were usually found in flooded corn fields, meadows, or weed patches along flood plains. The largest numbers were found on the Princeton marsh and in flooded areas along Rock River south of Moline. They were less frequently seen on ponds of the river terrace although in spring the series of ponds around McCausland always had three or four pairs. Occasionally the ducks were found on Credit Island harbor, Grant's Slough, or on the open reaches of the Mississippi above Lock 14. Flocks of American Widgeon were always small: never more than 25 and usually eight to ten birds in each. Early in spring they associated largely with Pintails but later they were usually found with Shovelers and Blue-winged Teal. When alone, in flocks of their own kind, Widgeon were extremely wary but with Teal or Shovelers they were easy to approach. They fed chiefly by "tipping-up" but in wet meadows--particularly where the meadow had been mowed or burned in the previous year--they were often found "grazing" on the tender sedge sprouts which were beginning to appear. The first American Widgeon to arrive in spring appeared to be mated. Later, however, mated pairs were fewer and there to an excess of males- often two males to each female.

SHOVELER

A fairly common spring migrant; an uncommon fall migrant.

Shovelers appeared in fairly large numbers during the last week of March and the first week of April. Three Shovelers seen by Fred T. Hall March 9, 1950, on Meridosia Slough constituted an exceptionally early record. Unlike most pond ducks they showed no gradual build-up and decline in numbers. The mass of birds arrived together and then departed together the last week of April leaving a few stragglers behind. During the first three weeks of April 400 to 2000 Shovelers could be recorded daily. There was much variation in maximum numbers from year to year. As with other pond species "spoonbills" were much less common in dry springs when little marsh land was flooded. After the main flight had passed northward pairs or small parties of Shovelers could be found until the last week of May. In spring of 1950 two pairs of Shovelers, obviously mated, remained on a small, reed covered marsh and pond near McCausland until the first week of June. Unfortunately, I was unable to in-



SHOVELER

vestigate the possibility that they were nesting in the area. The first fall migrants were always recorded in the first week of September. Thru the fall migratory period small flocks, pairs, or more often single birds, were recorded at irregular intervals until the third week of November. Never more than 50 Shovelers were recorded in any autumn.

The large groups of Shovelers were found in flooded corn fields north of Princeton and south of Moline. Smaller flocks occurred in flooded sedge meadows and weed patches of the flood plain in areas like those below Nahant. After the large flocks had gone small groups and pairs were most often found in terrace ponds like those in the vicinity of McCauslant. In the fall Shovelers frequented whatever ponds and marshes were still in existence but they were sometimes taken by scull boat hunters on the channel of the Mississippi, a habitat never occupied at other seasons. The large spring flocks have a tendency to form close-packed rafts on the open water of the larger marshes. On sunny days the ducks in these rafts slept a great part of the time. In cold, overcast weather the rafts broke up into small groups that fed actively. The large flocks had about twice as many males as females and about one-half the ducks in these groups appeared to be mated. The unmated birds showed little sexual activity until toward the end of April and in May when courting groups of one or two females and three to five males could be found on small ponds. The only courtship display I observed was a rapid bobbing up and down of the male's head. This species was rather quiet although females sometimes quacked like a Mallard and in flight the ducks often gave a low grating chatter something like the twittering of Blue-winged Teal but very harsh. Shovelers never formed large flocks on the wing. Even the large rafts, when put into the air broke down into groups of 5 to 20 birds.

WOOD DUCK

A fairly common spring migrant; an uncommon summer resident; a fairly common fall migrant.

Migrant Wood Ducks were first observed during the third week of March. During the last week of March and the first two weeks of April 25 to 30 could be observed each day. After the second week of April only about 10 Wood Ducks were ever observed in any one day. An influx of northern birds occurred usually during the third week of August and in September and October 40 or 50 Wood Ducks were seen on every trip into the sloughs north of Princeton. The last individuals were recorded in the second week of November.

Pairs of Wood Ducks were noted examining nesting hole sites in the first week of April but nesting apparently began about two weeks later. After May 1 single males and pairs were often observed in trees. No nests were found but females with young were seen. The nesting season apparently extended over a considerable period. Young were seen as early as May 23, 1948, May 28, 1949, (14 by Dick Schaefer) and as late as August, 1945, 20 (partially feathered).

The heavily wooded sloughs and back waters of the Mississippi, flooded forest land of the flood plains and islands, and, more rarely wooded creeks were the favorite habitat of Wood Ducks. Probably they were most abundant in the network of sloughs and chutes around Grant's Slough and Steamboat slough but it was at Credit Island that they were most easily observed. Each spring the narrow inlets on the north and south sides of the island and the pool at the western tip held at least a pair and sometimes as many as 10 Wood Ducks. Here they were relatively tame and could be watched from the automobile where the road neared in the water's edge. Many times in May I have seen pairs perched in the limbs of swamp white oaks which arch over the drive and on almost every day in that month pairs could be seen thread-

WOOD DUCK

ing their way swiftly but silently through the forested lower half of the island. Wood Ducks were less often seen about the ponds on Rock River south of Moline and along the channel of the Wapsipinicon. The regularity with which the species was observed in summer on Duck Creek between Eastern Avenue and Kimberly road in Davenport suggested that it nested there.

Wood Ducks were never observed in large groups (now spring and fall roosting groups are found numbering up to 200 birds, see Hein and Haugen, 1966, ed.). The largest flock I saw contained but 12 birds and flocks larger than six were very unusual. Almost all of the spring Wood Ducks were paired when they arrived in the area. Unmated birds were exceptional and were as often females as males. The marked tendency of the species to occur in pairs was also noticeable in fall. Flocks or small groups were composed of young of the year but whenever two birds were seen together they were always an adult male and female. This suggested that the band between pairs was stronger than in other ANATIDAE or that pair formation occurred earlier than in other species.

Until 1942 Federal regulations prohibited taking of Wood Ducks. Few duck hunters could recognize Wood Ducks in flight and the majority shot at any ducks which came over their decoys. Other hunters, better informed as to the duck's habits, killed those which they jumped by walking the edges of sloughs and creeks, even though the species was protected and there could be no excuse for mistaken identification in this kind of hunting. In this area almost as many Wood Ducks were killed in the protected years as when, in later years, regulations permitted one Wood Duck in the bag limit. The only change produced by the relaxed regulations was that the few hunters who had observed the previous laws made a positive effort to get the one bird allowed them under new laws when shooting of other species was slow. However, since Wood Ducks decoyed poorly and since "jumping" them was rather arduous work, relatively few were killed.

Field Reports

The three-months' period ending 31 October was cooler than usual according to readings at the Des Moines Airport, and there was a shortage of rainfall in each month; that in August being the greatest. Although there were a number of unusually windy days, there were no reports of "strangers" appearing as a result of the hurricanes to the south.

GREBES, PELICANS, CORMORANTS. There were no reports of Grebes other than Pied-billed, of which 35-40 were still at Blue Lake on 22 of October, (DH), and which peaked at 52 on 2nd of October at Union Slough, (PF). There were 7 White Pelicans on 22 September and the last left on 20 October, (PF), Unusually large flocks of 46 and 52 Cormorants were at Union Slough on the 10th and 23rd of October but both left within 48 hours.

HERONS. The only Great Blue was at Blue Lake on 5 of October (DH), and but one was seen at Lamoni on 26 of August. There are usually several herons of some kind there every fall, (DG). Common Egrets: 12 August, (FK), and 16 August, (JK). A total of 46 Black-crowned Night Herons on 4 September, (PF). A late American Bittern was at Goose Lake, 22 October, (JF).

GEESE, DUCKS. The earliest observation reported was of 27 Canada and 2 Blue on 21 September at Union Slough. The peak was reached in the week 13-19 October with 120 Canada, 6 White-fronted, and 115 Blue and Snow. (PF). The first flock was seen 30 September with a good migration the last two weeks of October (JK). There were a number of flights of Blue and Snow on 4 October, (DG). The pinioned Canadas at Red Rock Refuge had attracted a flock of 200 or more by 11 October, (GB). There was no concentration of Blue-winged

Teal as in other years, and only a scattering of others, (FK). From Union Slough: There was a movement of Blue-winged into the area from 25 to 28 August, and a large migration of puddle ducks on 21 and 22 September. On 27 October numbers were still rising with divers and puddlers coming in and the peak not reached. Maximum populations were 11,000 Mallards and 3,300 Wood Ducks.

HAWKS. There appears to be no improvement in the hawk situation: migration spotty, (JK): scarce, all kinds, (MK); a scarcity, (FK); all kinds very scarce in September, occasional Red-tailed or Marsh in the first half of October, (GB). David Fulks at Denver saw 10 Sharp-shinned and 3 Cooper's early in October, (RH). Harlan's were seen by L. Blevins rather early, 2 in late September, and 1 on 5 October, (PP). Red-shouldered: reported from two places, 2 at Wyth Park on 10 October seen by Florence Spring, (RH), and several sightings at Russell, 12 August, 3 September and a pair on 10 September, (HMcK). Flocks of Broad-winged were 150 on 23 September, (RH), 60-70 near Mt. Vernon by Geo. Marsh on 23 September, (DH). There was a movement of these in early October, (PF). Some Rough-legged were noted early in October, (PF). The only Bald Eagle was one seen four times in September, (PF). Marsh Hawks were thought down, (EB), way down, (MK), but, perhaps as many as usual, (Geo. Marsh, fide DH). Ospreys appeared more numerous than in other recent years: observed 16 September and 21 October (RH), 18 August by Annette Haffner, 26 August and 2 on 18 August by Glen Bloomfield, (RH); 1 October at Easter Lake near Des Moines, seen by Albert Berkowitz; 7 October near Jefferson, (JF); and 7 October and another from 16 to 26 October, (PF). A Peregrine was seen at Denver by David and Mike Fulks, (RH). Pigeon Hawks: seen on 13 September (AM), and by David Fulks, no date given, (RH). Sparrow Hawks: there was thought not the usual concentration in September this year, (EB); 10-15 were seen in one day in the last week of September, by L. Blevins (PP); and there was some migration the first week in September at Union Slough. They have been few in Des Moines.

SHOREBIRDS. The consensus is that shorebirds were few, but the reasons differ. Shorebirds poor due to the lack of rain to make mudlats, (JK); most of the better places around Des Moines dried up before the migration was well underway; rather dry since 1 July, (DG); on the other hand, rains early August eliminated mud flats and no waders, (FK); and, fewer this fall, water covering the mudflats, (PF). An exception was Goose Lake with good mudflats, (JF). No explanation but, almost non-existent, (MK); and not much luck this fall with waders. (MS). There was a good population of rails at Union Slough with peaks of 202 Virginias, 500 Soras, and 1600 Coots, the latter beginning to move out at the end of October. There were 500 Coots at Sweet's Marsh early in the month, (RH). Killdeers: plentiful, a flock of 25 on 28 July, and some seen or heard through September, (MK); 20-25 at Blue Lake on 22 October, (DH); and 48 at Union Slough in mid-September, (PF). A flock of 10-12 Golden Plover in mid-September in Northern Scott Co. reported by L. Blevins, (PP). A Ruddy Turnstone was at Brown's Slough on 14 September, (HMcK). There were 3 Woodcock observations, the last on 20 October, (PP). Snipe peaked at 144 the last week in September, (PF). Upland Plovers were: 2 near Des Moines on 16 July, and 5 in one field on 12 August, (FK). A rather late flock of Pectorals was in a hayfield on 5 October, with 25 counted, (DG). A flock of 50 Dowitchers and 2 Western Sandpipers were at Goose Lake in September, (JF). Two re-

ports of Avocets: 3 on 3 October at Rock Creek Lake, (MS), and 1 on 18 October at Union Slough, (PF).

GULLS, TERNS. Scattered Ring-billed and Herring Gulls have been present since 10 September, (PP). Union Slough had a peak of 3000 Franklin's. A Bonaparte's was seen on the Mississippi on 12 August, (PL). Two reports of Caspian Terns: 10 on 3 October, (MS), and 6 on 8 September, (DG). The peak of 54 Black Terns at Union Slough seems low.

CUCKOOS, OWLS. Numbers of cuckoos improved noticeably over last year with the last seen on 21 October, (PP). There were very few Black-billed at Des Moines. A Short-eared Owl at the Des Moines Imp. Res. was the first reported in some time. Saw-whets were banded on three dates in October with one recapture, (PP).

WHIP-POOR-WILLS, NIGHTHAWKS, SWIFTS, HUMMINGBIRDS. A late Whip-poor-will was found by Geo. Marsh on 8 October, (DH). Other observations, 7 September by the P. Davison's, (DH), 16 September, (FK), and banded 5 October, (PP). Migrating Nighthawks were: 35 on 29 August, (GB; 10 on 8 September, (DG); 150 on 4 September and 300-400 on the 17th, (DH): 300 on 16 September and 3 on the late date 15 October, (RH). About 1200 Chimney Swifts were seen the first of October, (W.Dau), and the last were 500 on 10 October, (PP). A late observation was 2 on 15 October, (RH). The only Hummingbirds, 16 and 25 September, (JK), and 2 on 13 September, (DH).

WOODPECKERS, FLYCATCHERS, SWALLOWS. Flickers were very common in September, (PL). A good migration in Des Moines, also. Redheaded were more than ever before, (EG), but appeared to have left Des Moines rather early. A late report mentions a Western Kingbird seen on 14 June at Killduff, (AM), and there were also observations on 11 and 13 October, (MK). Say's Phoebes seemed down, (EB). Only large flock of mixed swallows was seen on 29 August, (GB). Bank Swallows left a week early, (EG). There was a very heavy flight of Cliff Swallows from 20 to 27 August, and a good migration for another week, (EB). There were estimated to be 1000 Purple Martins in Morningside alone from mid August to 10 September, (DH).

JAYS, NUTHATCHES, CREEPERS, WRENS. Flocks of Blue Jays were seen on 8 October, (FK). A Red-breasted Nuthatch on 15 October, (RH), is the only report, none were banded at Davenport. (PP). Brown Creepers on 24 and 26 September, with 6 on the latter date, were rather early, (JK). There has been a strong movement of Winter Wrens from 10 September on, with 9 banded on 5 October, (PP). A Bewick's Wren came to a feeder, (EG). Carolina Wrens were heard on two dates in August at the Scout Camp near Boone by A. C. Berkowitz. Both Short-billed and Long-billed Marsh Wrens were numerous at Goose Lake in September, (JF), and also near Des Moines on 7 October according to Mrs. Peasley.

MIMICS, THRUSHES, KINGLETS, PIPITS. A late Brown Thrasher was banded on 23 October, (PP), Robins: down, (JK); have seen very few, although a neighbor reported a flock of 600, (GB); plentiful with 200 plus on 10 October, (MK): Flocks noted on 8 October, (FK). There was a small wave of Swainson's Thrushes from 10 to 13 October, (MK). A good migration of Veeries from 27 to 30 August, (PP). Bluebirds were scarce with small groups seen on only fice days, (GB), but, very abundant on 9 October, (AM). There was a wave of kinglets at Des Moines on 5 October, and one on the 6th, (FK), with many seen on the 8th and for several days, (GB). Golden-crowned were plentiful, but Ruby-crowned few, reversing the spring migration, (MK). Petersen banded

77 Ruby-crowned on 5 October. There were 2 Water Pipitits seen on 5 October, (DG).

WAXWINGS, STARLINGS, VIREOS. Waxwings were scarce all summer and fall, (MK), but flocks were seen on 8 October, (FK). Starlings are ever-increasing, (DH). All vireos seem down considerably, (MK). There was a good migration of Solitary at Des Moines, and Philadelphia had a good year, (PP).

WARBLERS. There were a number of waves with some variation according to location. These were designated as: late August, (PK); 28 August, (MK); 31 August, (JK); 31 August, 3 September and 7 October, for Des Moines; 4 September, (HMcK); 9-12 and 22-27 September, (PP); 15 and 30 September, (FK); 8 October, predominantly Myrtles, (GB, AM). Prothonotary: one of few Polk Co. fall dates, 3 September, by A. C. Berkowitz. Golden-winged: 4 September, (HMcK). Orange-crowned: in a big wave on 11 October, more than seen in years, (MK). Black-throated Blue: banded 5 October, (PP). Myrtle: a wave 6 October, (FK), a big wave on 11th and another on 20th October, (MK), but only seen for a few days after 6 October, (PL). Black-throated Green: a good year and an early one on 29 August, (PP). Cerulean: 2 on 24 September, (AM). Bay-breasted: an early arrival on 29 August, (PP). Connecticut: one on 1 October, (AM). Redstart: 40-50 in one flock on 28 August, (MK), few seen, (DH).

INTERIDS, FINCHES. There are two large roosts in Sioux City, one with thousands of Grackles, Starlings, Robins, and Doves. A Brewer's Blackbird was seen on 22 October, (JF). Reports on the sparrow migration vary: not many, (PK); lots, (HMcK); very good migration for three weeks, (JK); lacking, (AM), and heaviest from 10-16 October, Song, Chipping, White-throat, and Fox only abundant, (MK). A Pine Siskin was recorded on 9 October, (RH). Goldfinches are fewer than usual, (DH), but plentiful, (GB). LeConte's: 5 on 7 October seen by Mrs. Peasley, and 1 on 22 October by Mary Ellen Warters. Junco: first seen a few days earlier than last year, (PL), on 3 October, (DH), but very few, (GB). A Clay-colored noted on 15 October, (RH). Harris' have been unusually numerous: (HMcK, JK, GB, WHB). White-crowned: those seen have been immatures, (WHB). White-throated: 100 seen on 10 October in Wyth Park by Florence Spring, (RH); abundant as usual, (MK). Fox: lots, (HMcK); more than usual, (MK); but seem fewer in Des Moines. A very early Lapland Longspur was seen at Goose Lake on 30 September, (JF).

Contributors: Mrs. Gladys Black, Pleasantville; Eldon Bryant, Akron; John Faaborg, Jefferson; Paul Ferguson, Union Slough; Mrs. Edw. Getscher, Hamburg; Donald Gillaspey, Lamoni; Mrs. Darrell Hanna, Sioux City; Russell Hays, Waterloo; Milford Keeler, Mason City; Jim Keenan, Ogden; Fred Kent, Iowa City; Pearl Knoop, Marble Rock; Peter Lowther, Burlington; Howard McKinley, Russell; Ann Moore, Kilduff; Peter Petersen, Jr., Davenport; Mildred Stewart, Grinnell. WOODWARD H. BROWN, 4815 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, Iowa, 50312.

General Notes

WINGS AT MY TABLE. They came into my kitchen and dined on the table on the days it was warm enough to have the window open. As many as eighteen Cedar Waxwings at a time would hop from the window feeder to the table and eat chopped apples and raisins placed on the table for them. In trying to find a choice morsel, some would toss apples on the floor. Sometimes apples would fly in all directions

as they tried to find a raisin among the apples.

The waxwings came earlier than usual this year to eat the high bush cranberries on the ten shrubs in my yard. On January 17, 1967, they descended in full force with as many as ninety-seven on one bush alone. In a short time the berries were all gone and they even devoured the dried berries of the Longicera mackii honeysuckle. On February 24, a lone Cedar Waxwing came to my bird feeder by the window and looked longingly at the food there. This gave me an idea. In the BIRDS OF COLORADO by Bailey, there is a picture of his granddaughter feeding Bohemian Waxwings raisins. So raisins were placed on the feeder. It worked! They kept coming and coming and on one day I saw three Bohemians among them. Chopped apples were added to the raisins.

Now the problem arose how to get enough apples to accomodate that many boarders. My husband in his travels kept looking for frozen apples left on trees and lying on the ground below. This supply helped immensely to supplement the apples bought at the grocery store for 23¢ a pound. The problem was not really solved, however, until I got a bushel of apples from my nephew who has the DeLong Orchard at Lamoni, Iowa. It was a pleasure to observe them. There was no pushing, fighting, back-biting, or quarreling among them. Many times they would even move over to let another one wedge in, or a few would line up on the edge and wait their turn. Finally they learned to fly away with a morsel of apple and finish eating it in the pin oak, a favorite perch of theirs before descending on the feeder.

On March 1, the temperature in this section of Iowa reached in the high sixties. A few honey gees swarmed over the apples. The waxwings would not come near. They would fly over the feeder, take a look at the bees and then sally back to the pin oak. They tried this many times during the afternoon, even resting on the edge of the feeder for a second. Evidently they do not care for the competition from Starlings of House Sparrows. Not once did they have to battle them. Only a Robin which had been here all winter eating the Lonicera mackii honeysuckle berries caused them trouble. One day the Robin set up his perch on the clothesline and was determined to keep the raisins for himself. However he soon lost his interest when other food became available for him.

CEDAR WAXWINGS
Photo by Richard DeLong

On March 5 a few waxwings kept flying toward the window. This gave me an idea. Why not open the window and place the apples and raisins on the table? It worked! In they came one, two, five, fifteen, and finally eighteen. What a time they had! Many friends came to see them in the days that followed. One lady suggested I should charge admission and that would be an apple or handful of raisins! We sat in the dining room and watched them come and go. Conversation did not frighten them; only the quick movement of one's hands or body. One day a lady had been here at 11:30 to watch them. It was unusually warm that March day and after she left I set the table and left the pan of apples near the window. My husband came home for lunch and was sitting at the table. I took out a hot casserole from the oven, placed it on the table, and turned to get some warm rolls. As I turned around, to my surprise there were the waxwings in on the table. One had hopped up on the hot casserole and two had hopped up on the small radio on the table. Wallace sat there with his fork suspended in mid-air and froze. Had I had a camera, I do not know which would be the more interesting, the expression on Wallace's face or the waxwings on the casserole!

In the days that followed, I found I could iron in the kitchen, could carry on a conversation on the phone, or turn the meat in the frying pan, just so I made no quick sudden movement. They would gorge themselves on these chopped apples until they could not hold another one. Then swish they would all leave at once out the window. Sometimes one or two would remain with a determination to eat some more.

Observing these birds for several months, and we counted fifty-one that we had been feeding, we decided that nations and people could learn much from them - how to get along with one another. They are affectionate, tender-hearted, eager to share the little available with each other. They are beautiful to behold! They are fond of showing off their dressy top-knots as they sit motionless in a compact body in the tree tops facing the wind. --MRS. W. C. DELONG, Box 278, Shenandoah.

Obituaries

ARTHUR JULIUS PALAS, a Charter Member of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union and its President in the years 1927-28, died at his home in Postville, Iowa, November 23, 1967.

He was born at Clayton Center, Iowa, May 19, 1881, the son of John and Caroline Volz Palas. He graduated from Drake University, Des Moines, in 1907, and received a low degree from Texas State University, Austin, in 1908. He practiced as an attorney in Elkader, Des Moines, and Postville for more than fifty years.

He married Anna Rehmann of Des Moines in 1909. She passed away November 18, 1934, following a ten-day illness of malaria fever. On January 6, 1936, he was united in marriage with Elsa Fleig of Des Moines. To them were born two children, Fritz, now of Minneapolis, and Gretchen (Mrs. Eugene Nuss, of Milledgeville, Georgia).

Arthur Palas was identified with the Iowa Ornithologists' Union from its very beginning. He attended the organization meeting at Ames, February 28, 1923, and was elected a member of the first Executive Committee, serving with Rev. LeRoy Titus Weeks and Prof. Homer R. Dill. Later he was President of the Union. Arthur Palas and Walter Rosene attended every meeting of the

Union, including the first one in 1923, over a long period of years, and there was a little rivalry to see which one would first miss a meeting. Evidently this happened to Palas when he did not attend the Spirit Lake convention in 1939. Rosene's record was unbroken. He attended every meeting from 1923 through 1941, which was the year of his death.

Mr. Palas also helped to organize the Des Moines Audubon Society, and he was its first President. Arthur and Anna Palas were prominent in the affairs of the Des Moines Audubon Society during the years they lived there, and were known as two of the most competent bird students in the area. Anna's untimely death brought to a close the many fine trips they had with Des Moines birders. After her death Mr. Palas terminated his law practice in Des Moines and moved to Postville.

He was an active member of the St. Paul Lutheran Church, the Masonic Lodge, and the Kiwanis Club of Postville. Burial was in the Postville cemetery. --F. J. Pierce.

HENRY BIRKELAND, who joined the Iowa Ornithologists' Union in 1933, died on September 16, 1967. He was born February 8, 1883, on a farm near Roland, Iowa, the son of Holger and Borgilla Birkeland. He never married and farmed the home farm until 1938, when he moved into the town of Roland. He then entered the hybrid seed corn business, but retired from that work in 1948.

Mr. Birkeland's interest in birds was deep-rooted and evidently began early in life as a farm boy. He built up a well completed private bird library, a major hobby over many years. An important event in his life was a visit to Norway for two and a half months in the summer of 1949. He described the trip in IOWA BIRD LIFE, Vol. 20, 1950, pp. 51-52. Biographical data interested him and he worked for many years on a list of all deceased Iowa ornithologists; his data included date and place of birth and death, and the published biography and portrait of each person. This completed biographical index, with 122 entries, was published in IOWA BIRD LIFE, Vol. 21, 1951, pp. 32-36 and Vol. 31, 1961, pp. 27-29.

Mr. Birkeland was a life-long member of the Lutheran Church. Burial was in the Roland cemetery.--F. J. Pierce.

Book Reviews

OF PREDATION AND LIFE--Paul L. Errington--Iowa State University Press, Ames--237 p. many line drawings--1967--$6.95.

An excellent explanation of predators and their role in nature's scheme. The first section of the book covers the general pattern of predation and touches specific major predators. The middle section covers in detail specific cases based on Dr. Errington's years of careful study. The two major prey species considered are the Bobwhite and the muskrat. Most of the research, of course, was done in the Ames area. Far from the usual dry report liberally sprinkled with charts and tables his research is turned into smooth flowing prose which hold the readers interest nicely. The final section summarizes predation and lists references for advanced reading.

This book was in the first draft at the time of Dr. Errinton's death five years ago. It was completed by his widow with the aid of Dr. Milton Weller and Dr. Ira Gabrielson. All students of wildlife management are indeed fortunate that this book had been brought to the first draft stage and could be

completed. It conveys much of Dr. Errington's deep insight into predation. ed.

HOURS AND THE BIRDS, A SASKATCHEWAN RECORD --R. D. Symons--University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Ontario--224 p., 17 color plates and many sketches--1967- $12.50.

A new approach to a regional bird work. The author, a longtime resident of Saskatchewan where he has been a rancher, homesteader, wheat farmer, teacher and conservationist, tells of the avifauna through his many experiences. The text dealing with birds directly follow checklist order and ramble nicely intertwined with personal touches. The habitats are covered in the same readable manner. Throughout the text are color plates and line drawings by the author. Also included are a checklist of the birds of Saskachewan, a bibliography, suggestions for bird watching methods, and indexes of birds and plants. So, instead of producing a regional book in the usual mold the author has woven a delightful web of experiences around the factual data and presented a glimpse of prairie life.--ed.

WORLD OF THE GREAT WHITE HERON--A SAGA OF THE FLORIDA KEYS--Marjory Bartlett Sanger--Devin-Adair Co., New York--144 p., many line drawings by John Henry Dick--1967--$10.00.

A mixture of natural history and history which gives much insight into this fine bird and its environment. The author tells of Audubon's discovery of the Great White Heron and the species which share the ecological nitche of the Florida keys. The struggle to obtain protection for these birds and preserve habitat on the Keys is nicely chronicled. This well written story will appeal to naturalists, historians and geographers. The drawings add much to the overall story and are very well done. --ed.

FIELD BOOK OF WILD BIRDS AND THEIR MUSIC--F. Schuyler Mathews--Dover Publication, New York--325 p. with 71 black and white plates and 6 maps -1967 $2.75 paperbound.

A reprint of the 1921 edition of the first major study of bird songs in musical terms. Modern tape recordings have shown the musical scorings remarkably accurate. Long out of print, this description of the songs and calls of 127 species will make anyone familiary with reading music able to recognize the voices of these birds. A forward by Dr. Donald Borror of Ohio State U. relates the methods of Mathews to modern techniques. Any musicians among the bird watching fraternity will be especially interested in this book. --ed.

NORTH AMERICAN NEST RECORD CARD PROGRAM

As many readers are aware, the Nest Record Card Program is now completing its third year on a continent-wide basis. We appreciate the assistance of the hundreds of persons and Bird Clubs whose enthusiasm and patience make this program possible. We are anxious to solicit help from as many clubs and cooperators as possible. If you are interested in helping in this research, please get in touch with the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University for instructions and nest-record cards. Before the new nesting season begins, we urge all present contributors to return any completed cards. We also request that participating clubs and birders order additional cards, if necessary, well in advance of the 1968 nesting season. CONTACT--Mrs. Edith Edgerton, Nest record Card Program, Laboratory of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, New York 14850.